

Second, if "freedom" has not only a negative meaning—if it means not only to be free from something and to do whatever we want to do—then the individual must again experience himself as a part of a whole, as a part of a lasting, embracing order that he himself helps to form.

Third, if individuality is expressed by the proper relation of the individual to the central problems and by the way the individual lives as a part of the whole, then it becomes each individual's task to develop his individuality, to give to his own life a sensible, consistent meaning and shape.

These are the tasks. How are they to be accomplished? It is simple to formulate a program; everything depends upon how it is carried out:

Knowledge and skill certainly are indispensable; for self-preservation, although it is not everything, will always be an essential goal. Furthermore, we can only strive from the periphery to the center; we can only construct a whole from its parts. But the subject matter, important as it is, should not be the ultimate goal of our learning. To absorb knowledge, to prepare for examinations, or for jobs, should not be the only meaning of our studies. We should not acquire ready-made knowledge, but we should learn to ask questions. A student who leaves a college should not regard himself as finished, but he should have become a questioning person; he should never stop questioning, never stop striving from narrowness to breadth. A student enters college limited, like every young man, by a narrow horizon of prejudice; his standards are ephemeral. To open the narrow horizon, to give him standards of real greatness, to make him familiar with the complexity of problems—that is the main point.

To belong as a part to a whole is also easier said than done. "The whole" is a name easily misused and easily misunderstood. Does not a soldier also belong to a whole? Surely, but in quite another way. In a campaign the plan of the whole is necessarily secret. Only the general and a few others know it. The soldier serves the whole, but he neither knows nor understands it, nor can he influence the formation of the plan. Unconditional obedience and courage are asked of him. Here the relation of the individual to the whole is an abstract one, a passive one, a relation that excludes responsibility. It is not such an integration that we have in mind; it is an antithetical one. By a "whole" we mean a community which the individual helps to build, a community in which the weal and woe of the whole depend on the actions of the individuals, one in which the consequences of the individual's actions fall back on him, one in which his actions are not hidden by clouds of anonymity. In the future only a state which is constituted as an organic whole can be truly democratic.